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**NEWS RELEASE:**  
***Vandals damage local power line***  
***BPA offers up to \$1,000 for information***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**THURSDAY, April 30, 1998**  
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**IDAHO FALLS, Idaho** — The same sunny, spring weather that has been attracting people to the outdoors also increases incidents of vandalism. The Bonneville Power Administration is offering up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of vandals who caused thousands of dollars worth of damage to a transmission line near Idaho Falls.

On April 26, at 10 a.m., a BPA transmission line maintenance crew was notified of trouble on the Palisade-Goshen 115,000-volt power line that runs through southeastern Idaho. The segment of the line that tested bad was 52 miles west of Palisades Dam on the Snake River. When repair crews arrived at the site, they discovered that two spans of conductor wire and a transmission tower cross arm had been damaged by gun shot. There are no suspects, but the likely perpetrators are young adults who enjoy shooting insulators.

"Anyone shooting at power lines for fun should consider the dangers and consequences," explained BPA Security Specialist Gail Dreckman. "High voltage power lines pose enormous risk to anyone who shoots at them. Downed power lines can cause fires and lethal ground voltages can kill or injure the vandals and others in the area."

Fortunately, there was no disruption of electrical service to customers. BPA used alternative pathways to deliver power while crews spent more than ten hours repairing the line. Had this incident resulted in power interruption to BPA customers, costs would have been significantly higher.

BPA has spent as much as \$500,000 in a single year just to replace transmission line insulators and other hardware damaged and destroyed by gunshot vandalism. These costs get passed on to customers and ratepayers. Above and beyond these monetary costs and inconveniences are the possible disruption of essential services—fire departments, police and ambulance services—that depend on reliable electric service.

The Crime Witness Program was created by BPA in 1994 as a cost-effective way to involve the public in combating crimes that could potentially cause power outages. Through its neighborhood watch-style program, BPA offers cash rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators.

Since 1994, the Crime Witness Program has generated hundreds of telephone tips resulting in dozens of arrests, thousands of dollars of recovered property and, most importantly, deterrence of future crime. For example, in 1997, a total of 237 insulator units were replaced, representing an 82% decrease from the 1,313 units replaced in 1996. Cumulative savings since the program began totals more than \$600,000. Informants can call toll free 1-800-437-2744 and their identity will be kept confidential.

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